

Bright ideas saving tax dollars

KYTC employee suggestions help stretch resources, improve customer service

By: Mark Brown

At a time when budgets are lean, every dollar counts, really counts. That's why top state officials, including Gov. Steve Beshear, have praised a group of state employees for their innovative ideas that promote government efficiency.

In February, 47 employees, including seven from KYTC, were recognized for submitting useful ideas, all implemented, to the Kentucky Employee Suggestion System program. Many of the ideas are realizing measurable financial savings, while others are saving time or have improved customer service.

"The backbone of this cabinet is a team of sharp-minded professionals willing to think beyond the status quo in order to make the most of limited resources," said Secretary Joe Prather. "I commend this talented group for their appreciation of financial prudence and efficient customer service."

By statute, employees with merit status are eligible to offer suggestions through the program, administered by the Kentucky Personnel Cabinet. Suggestions can be made by visiting the Personnel Cabinet's Website and completing the appropriate documentation. Employees whose ideas are implemented receive monetary rewards that range from \$100 to \$2,500.

Thanks to a suggestion submitted by Willie Payton, the state has saved more than \$141,000 since approving a plan to issue registration decals for annual commercial truck license renewals instead of new license plates.

Payton, director of the Division of Motor Vehicle Licensing, received a \$2,500 reward.

"It's a practical solution that saves material and reduces costs for the cabinet," Payton said. "That's the important function of the suggestion system – to allow employees with a micro-view of the process to have an opportunity to improve the operation."

Stella Dean, an administrative section

supervisor in the Division of Motor Carriers, received \$100 for each of two ideas submitted. She suggested adding her division's Web address to temporary fuel and non-reciprocal permits – providing useful information to recipients who might otherwise have to call the office.

She also suggested removing the "year" reference on the solid waste renewal form, eliminating the need for

annual revision – saving time and materials.

Dean said the suggestion system is an easy way for employees to play a role in streamlining procedures to better serve customers. "The system is not only user friendly but provides an unbiased review of any and all suggestions," Dean said.

Other KYTC award recipients, each receiving \$100, include:

- Gina Bartley, right of way agent, District 12 – suggested placing reflective tape on snowplow blades to increase visibility.
- Jadie Tomlinson, engineer specialist, Highways – suggested that wire, cable and



Left to right with Secretary Prather: Loretta Fowler, Willie Payton, and Tonya Terrell

conduit be approved for conformity and specifications through resident engineers without requiring sampling and inspection through the materials division.

- Loretta Fowler, administrative section supervisor, Vehicle Licensing – suggested using postcards instead of letters to remind customers to pick up specialty license plates.
- Maurice Clayton, administrative specialist, Driver Licensing – while working for Highlands, suggested installing a door at the Warren County maintenance facility to insulate the office area and prevent controlled air from escaping to the garage area.
- Tonya Terrell, program coordinator, Motor Carriers – suggested creating a form to ensure automobile mileage correction is accurately reported during auto transfers.

Across state government, suggestions that were implemented banked more than \$9 million in savings, and nearly \$34,000 in award money was presented, according to Debbie Bohannon, benefits manager for the Personnel Cabinet's employee recognition branch and chair of the employee suggestion council. She said savings varies widely each year.

But, ideas don't have to be about money. "We are interested in ideas that might improve any aspect of state-government work, whether it's safety, employee morale, public relations or some other area that relates to our daily operation in state government," Bohannon said.

For more information about the suggestion program, visit the state employees section of the Personnel Cabinet's Website: www.personnel.ky.gov. □

KYTC employees 'Bowl for Kids' Sake'

Several Transportation Cabinet employees participated in this year's Bowl for Kids' Sake to support Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Bluegrass.

Based on pledged amounts, cabinet employees raised more than \$9,000 for the program, around \$3,500 more than they raised in 2007. KYTC was second only to the Education Cabinet, which raised more than \$10,000.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Bluegrass is a nonprofit organization that matches central Kentucky children with adult mentors. The program serves more than 2,400 children each year throughout its 14-county service area.

The local organization currently has 600 children matched with mentors. More than 400 are waiting to be matched. □



Motor Vehicle Licensing honored

The Division of Motor Vehicle Licensing was recently honored for its work to improve service to customers during the vehicle titling process. The division won the Customer Service Excellence Award at the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators conference in Hilton Head, S.C. Dan Glass, commissioner of the Department of Vehicle Regulation, accepted the award.

The Division of Motor Vehicle Licensing issues an average of 1.4 million titles a year. Significant changes in the titling process reduced the time required to complete a request from a maximum of 32 days to a maximum of eight days. □



First row: Geri Grigsby, Jeanette Walker, Godwin Onodu. **Second Row:** Willie Payton, Loretta Fowler. **Third row:** Dan Glass, Netta Harrod, Gloria Brown. **Forth row:** David Feldhaus, Melissa Crews, Tony Momenpour and Fanny Haney.